It did not, accordingly—at least in the judgment of many—rise quite to the heights attained during the T'ang.[7] Some of it, however, displayed a freedom even from T'ang forms and was a relatively unhampered expression of the writer's inner emotions. As a rule it was not the work of professional poets, as had been so much of the best verse of the T'ang, but of scholars whose chief interest was elsewhere—in other literary pursuits, in the duties of public office, or in religion. Thus one of the most famous of the Sung poets, Su Shih, or Su Tung-p'o (1036-1101), was a brilliant scholar—already mentioned as a noted philosopher—who came up through the ordinary channels of the state examinations, spent much of his life in the employment of the government, was an art critic, the builder of a causeway in the West Lake by Lin-an, and wrote essays as well as poetry. Another was primarily a recluse who gave much time to Taoist studies, and still another finished his life as a Buddhist monk.

With all this interest in the past, under the Sung the Chinese mind was not so nearly closely bound by it as the preceding pages may have appeared to indicate. Works on astronomy, medicine, botany, and mathematics showed concern for other than humanistic and political studies. For example, several treatises on flowers and fruits have come down to us, among them what is probably the most ancient scientific account of the varieties of citrus fruits which is known in any language. Fiction, moreover, was written, and in the vernacular of the time. Chinese mechanical inventiveness, too, was displaying itself. It was probably under the Sung that gunpowder, previously employed for fireworks, was first applied to warfare—in explosive

hand-grenades.

Then, as we have seen, the compass now appears to have come into use as an aid to navigation. Kear the close of the dynasty, moreover, occurs the earliest known reference to the abacus, that now familiar device for reckoning. Whether it was an importation or of native origin we do not know.

CULTURE UNDER THE SUNG: THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF PRINTING

Inventiveness and mechanical skill showed themselves especially in printing. That art which, as we have said, as far as our records show us, first developed under the T'ang, and, under the